

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

672

August 27, 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street Southwest
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write today regarding the Notice of Inquiry (NOI) from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to support access to care using telehealth in the Connected Care pilot program. One fifth of the U.S. population resides in rural communities where it can often be difficult to access health care services, and telehealth has the potential to expand access to necessary care for these populations. This pilot program will help to connect individuals to care where they live.

We were especially pleased to see the emphasis on maternal health care in the NOI. Between 2010 and 2014, nearly 10 percent of rural hospitals closed their obstetrics units, leaving the women who depend on this care with limited options. Telehealth can potentially offer critical and cost-effective solutions to pregnant women, as some of the most common pregnancy-related complications can be avoided with routine monitoring and medical care.

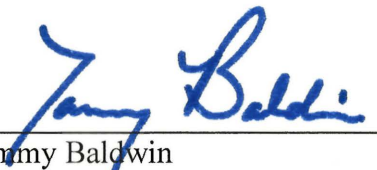
As the FCC moves forward with this pilot program, we request that you maintain the focus on maternal health in the NOI. We also encourage you to work with the Department of Health and Human Services to identify best practices for positive outcomes for mothers and babies by using safe, effective telehealth applications and devices in the Connected Care pilot program.

Getting additional resources to rural and low-income communities is crucial to solving our nation's most pressing health care challenges, including for mothers and babies. Telehealth services can provide an innovative way for individuals to access care, and we look forward to working with you to help connect our most vulnerable populations to the care they need.

Sincerely,


Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

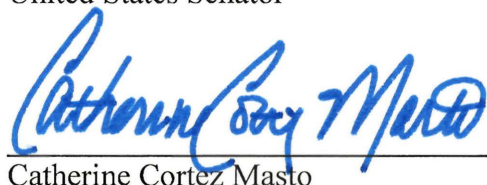

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2018

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letter expressing support for the Commission's inquiry into creating a Connected Care Pilot Program. As the son of two doctors who practiced in rural Kansas, I understand the critical role that broadband plays in providing patients in rural areas with high-quality healthcare services. And as Chairman, I've seen the potential of telemedicine firsthand, from a Veterans Affairs facility in rural Lecanto, Florida to Hermiston, Oregon, where local healthcare providers are making a real impact on rural communities.

Broadband-enabled telehealth can provide access to services that may not otherwise be available to those in rural America, where healthcare provider shortages and other challenges otherwise prevent families from getting the care they need. That is why the Commission is taking steps to support broadband connectivity for those communities with the goal of maximizing the benefits of telehealth for all Americans through enhanced digital access. In June, the Commission adopted a Report and Order that takes immediate action to increase funding for rural hospitals and health clinics by 43%, or \$171 million. This increase—along with future inflation adjustments and a mechanism to carry forward unused funding from previous years—will help ensure that rural healthcare providers get the connectivity they need to better serve patients for years to come.

In August, the Commission unanimously adopted a Notice of Inquiry, led by Commissioner Carr, which sought public input on how the Commission can help advance the movement in telehealth towards connected care—high-tech care that can be delivered directly to patients regardless of where they are physically. The Notice seeks comment on creating an experimental Connected Care Pilot Program to support the delivery of connected care telehealth services—including those for pregnant women seeking healthcare before, during, and after pregnancy—to low-income Americans.

I look forward to reviewing the record that develops in response to the Notice, and to working with you and my colleagues to bridge this critical gap in the digital divide. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2018

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senate
B40A Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto:

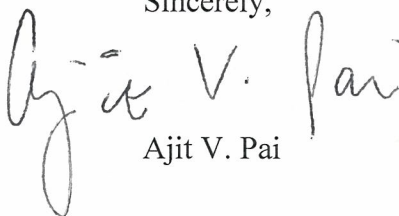
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2018

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
B85 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hassan:

Thank you for your letter expressing support for the Commission's inquiry into creating a Connected Care Pilot Program. As the son of two doctors who practiced in rural Kansas, I understand the critical role that broadband plays in providing patients in rural areas with high-quality healthcare services. And as Chairman, I've seen the potential of telemedicine firsthand, from a Veterans Affairs facility in rural Lecanto, Florida to Hermiston, Oregon, where local healthcare providers are making a real impact on rural communities.

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Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2018

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

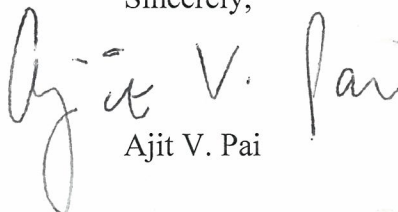
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

November 13, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letter expressing support for the Commission's inquiry into creating a Connected Care Pilot Program. As the son of two doctors who practiced in rural Kansas, I understand the critical role that broadband plays in providing patients in rural areas with high-quality healthcare services. And as Chairman, I've seen the potential of telemedicine firsthand, from a Veterans Affairs facility in rural Lecanto, Florida to Hermiston, Oregon, where local healthcare providers are making a real impact on rural communities.

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November 13, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
G12 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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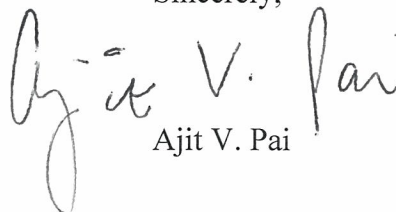
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